

Also by J. F. HORRABIN

AN ATLAS OF CURRENT AFFAIRS

AN ATLAS OF EMPIRE

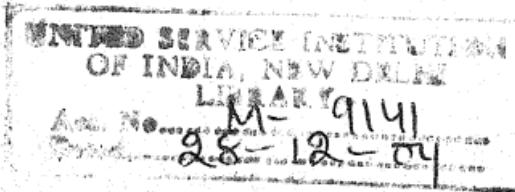
THE OPENING-UP OF THE WORLD

Vol. III.—July 1940 to January 1941

AN ATLAS-HISTORY OF
THE SECOND GREAT WAR

by
J. F. HORRABIN

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

IN a history of this kind, which aims at chronicling in briefest outline all the varied activities and events of the war, the daily doings of the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force—the war which went on unceasingly during the whole six months of this record—necessarily get less than a proportionate amount of space. Scores of separate raids on Germany have to be reported in a sentence or two, and a blob or two on a map. The endless task of guarding convoys and coasts only gets a mention at all when, as rarely happens, a ship is lost. The reader must supply his own perspective in these matters. If he studies this book in his air-raid shelter he may be glad to know that most of it was perforce drawn and written in the same cheerful, if cramped, surroundings.

J. F. H.

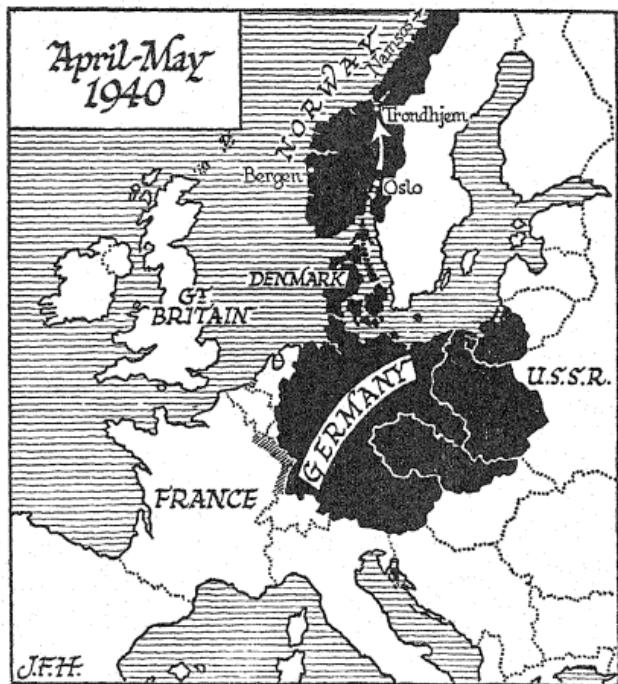


A Year of War (I)—

At the beginning of September, 1940, twelve months after she invaded Poland, Germany could point to great accessions of territory in Europe.

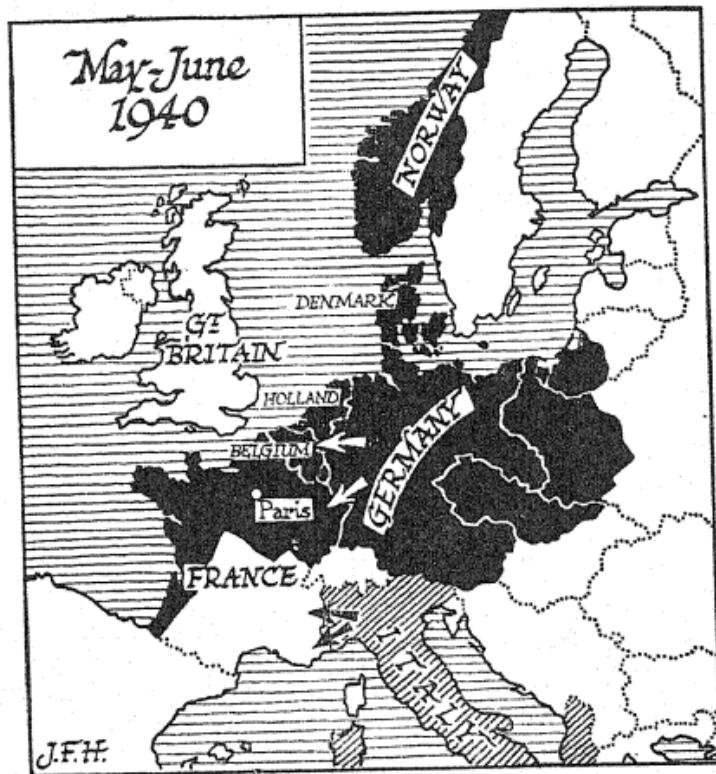
Despite the desperate resistance of the Poles, and the heroic defence of Warsaw, the campaign was over in a month ; and the country was divided between Germany and Soviet Russia.

Later in 1939, Russia invaded Finland, and while the war in the west remained almost static for months, the fierce and bloody Finnish war was fought out in all the rigours of a northern winter.



A Year of War (2)—

AFTER seven months' stalemate in the west the Nazis, in April, struck northward at Norway and Denmark. The Danes offered no resistance. The Norwegian campaign (except for the fighting in the Namsos area which continued for a few weeks longer) was over by the first week of May. The Germans were in effective occupation of all southern Norway.

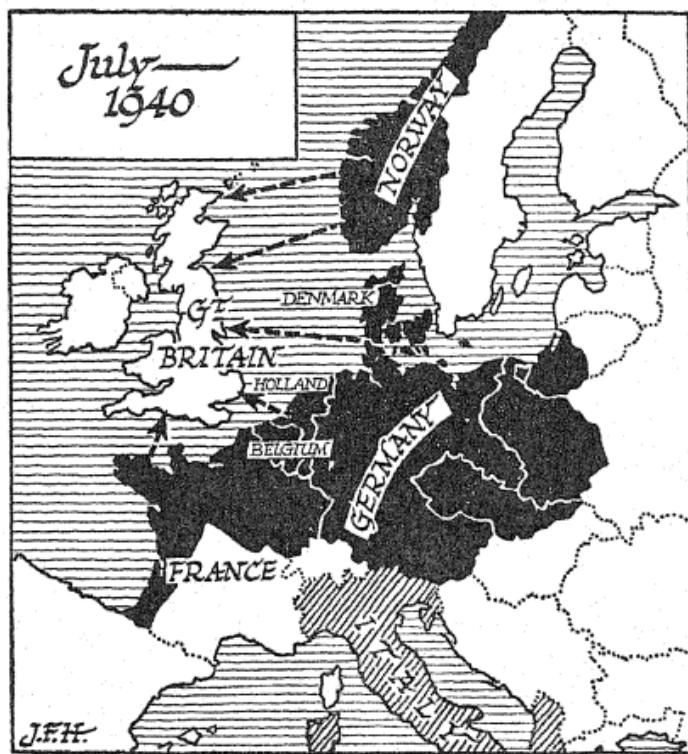


A Year of War (3)—

ON May 10, 1940, just over eight months after the war began, the Germans struck at Holland and Belgium; and their successful break-through enabled them to turn the western flank of the Maginot Line.

The forcing of the line of the Meuse made it possible for them to make a gap between the main French armies to the south, and the B.E.F., the Belgians, and the northern French army. The Dutch capitulated on 14th May, the King of the Belgians on 28th May. The British retreated to Dunkirk, and the great bulk of the army was safely embarked for England.

The Battle of France which ensued was over by 17th June, when Marshal Pétain asked Hitler for an armistice. Italy had declared war on France and Britain on 10th June.



A Year of War (4)—

By the beginning of July, 1940, ten months after the beginning of war, Britain stood alone against an enemy holding the whole southern and eastern coastline of the Channel and the North Sea. There was a week or two of relative quiet. In August the air war commenced in deadly earnest. The Germans made mass raid after mass raid across the Channel, on the ports and aerodromes of southern England. As the first year of the war came to an end a German invasion of Britain seemed imminent and inevitable.



The Battle of the Channel—

DURING the latter part of July the Germans took advantage of their hold on the whole northern French coast to attack shipping convoys in the Channel. Earlier in the month they had occupied the Channel Islands. On 29th July they made a mass air attack on Dover Harbour, when 28 of their 80 'planes were shot down in half an hour. During August they made mass raids on convoys, on naval dockyards like Portsmouth and Portland, and on aerodromes. Night raids began over a wide area of Britain.

The German losses were enormous. During August 1,096 German 'planes were destroyed over Britain. In September the total was 1,071. Some of the peak days were : 15th August, 180 German 'planes lost, 34 British ; 18th August, 153 to 22 ; 7th September, 103 to 22 ; 15th September, 232 to 25 ; 27th September, 133 to 34.

Meantime the R.A.F. carried out unceasing attacks on the Dutch, Belgian, and French channel ports, where the Germans were reported to be concentrating hundreds of self-propelled barges. On 11th September, Mr. Churchill broadcast a warning of imminent invasion. A day or two later, on the 15th, the great mass air attack occurred in which 232 German 'planes were brought down. If this attack was the prelude to invasion, then the prelude had failed.

III

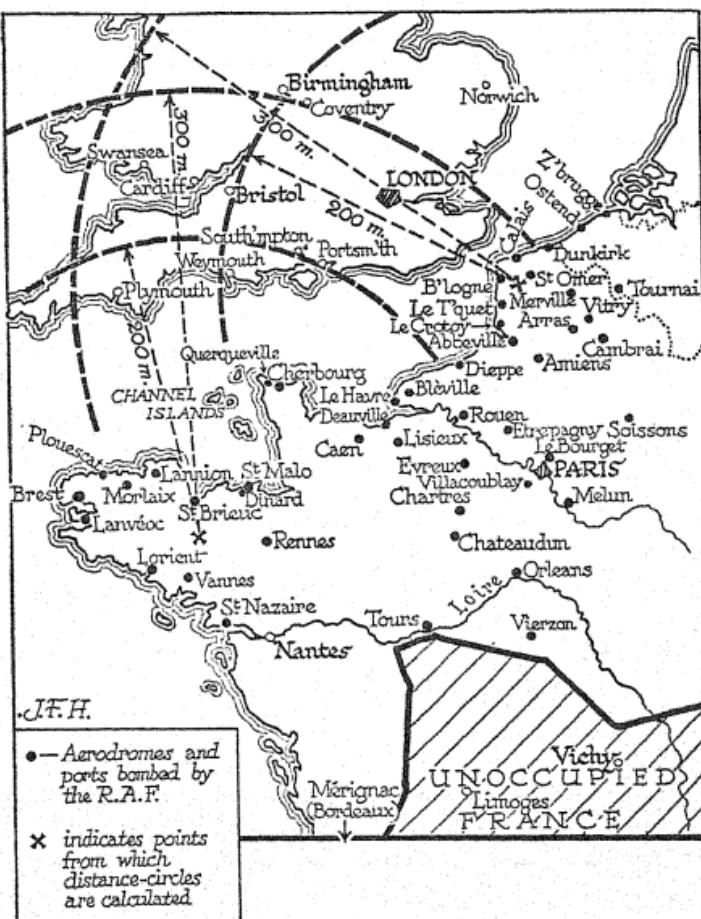


Air Attack on London—

ON 4th September Hitler declared that if Britain persisted in defying him he would wipe out her cities. From that date, and for the next two months, London became the Luftwaffe's main objective. The first big attack on central London had taken place on 24th August. Between 7th September and 4th November, London had not a single night's respite from raids, and day raiding was unremitting. There was no attempt to discriminate between targets of military importance and those with none. East End, West End, the south and the north of the metropolis all suffered. On 5th November Mr. Churchill announced that, to that date, 14,000 civilians had been killed, and 20,000 wounded in raids, nearly four-fifths of them in London.

On 29th December, the Nazis dropped thousands of incendiary bombs on the centre of the City, and many historic buildings were destroyed in the great fire which followed.

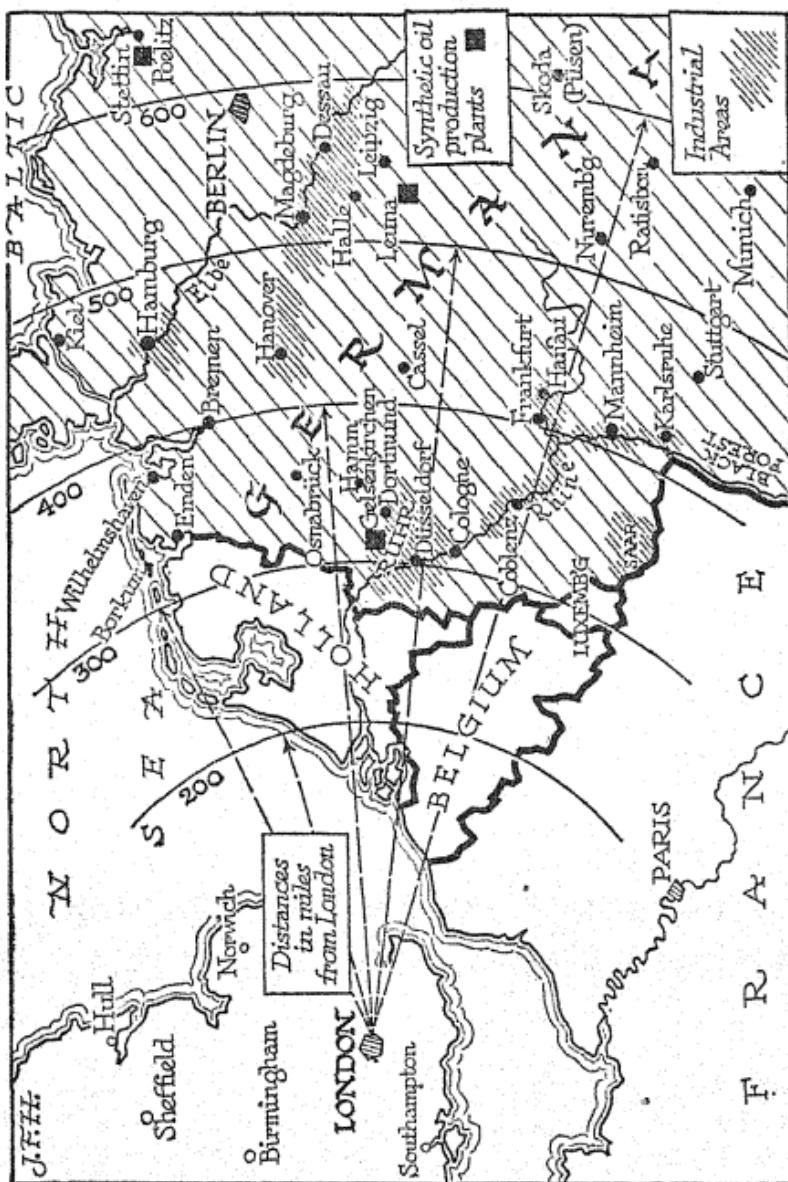
Meantime, intermittently throughout the autumn and winter months, Dover and the surrounding area was shelled by the German guns on Cape Gris Nez.



German Air Bases in France—

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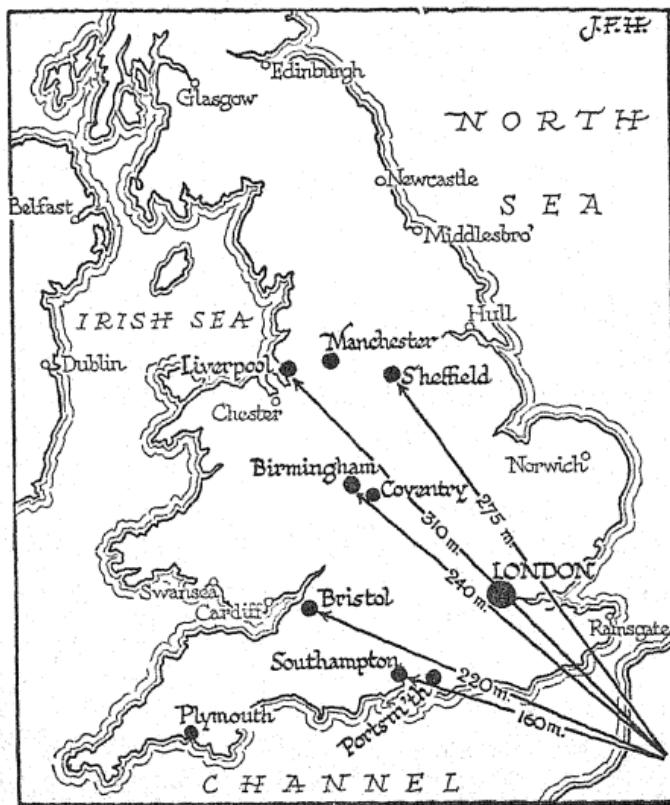
It was their possession of northern France which gave the Germans their great opportunity for mass air raids on Britain. Their aerodromes were spread out from Brittany in the west, through Normandy and Artois, to the Pas de Calais in the north-east. All these air bases were constantly bombed by the R.A.F.



The R.A.F. over Germany—

A DETAILED history of the R.A.F.'s bombing raids on Germany during the last half of 1940 would require as many maps as this volume holds. Nightly, almost without a break, and in every kind of weather, raids were carried out on important military targets—ports and docks, aerodromes, munition and aircraft factories, oil refineries and stores, power plants, railway yards, canals. Every industrial region was visited again and again. The Nazis began to plan the transfer of various industries from western to eastern Germany. But the R.A.F. struck as far east as Stettin, at Berlin itself, at the industrial centres of Saxony, and at the Skoda Works at Pilsen (Czechoslovakia).

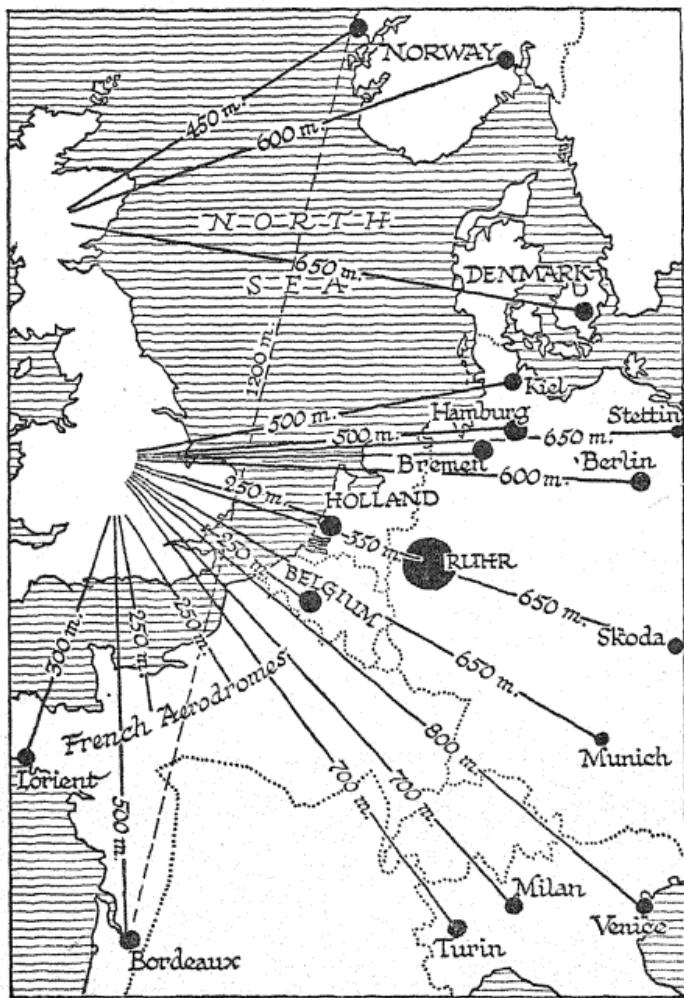
Probably no single raid gave greater satisfaction to the air crews taking part in it than that of 9th November, when Munich was bombed on the night when Herr Hitler had planned to speak.



Mass Raids on British Cities—

ALTHOUGH raids on London continued, from November onwards German night raiders began to concentrate on provincial cities and towns, particularly in Merseyside, in the Midlands, and in the south-west. Coventry was the object of a fierce attack on the night of 14th November. Bristol, Southampton, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Portsmouth, Sheffield, and Plymouth were also subjected to concentrated bombardment with high explosives and incendiaries. In every case business and residential areas suffered more heavily than did factories or other targets of military significance.

During the month of November, 4,588 civilians were killed, and over 6,000 injured and detained in hospital, in air raids on Britain (see Diagram 152).



The Battlefield of the R.A.F.—

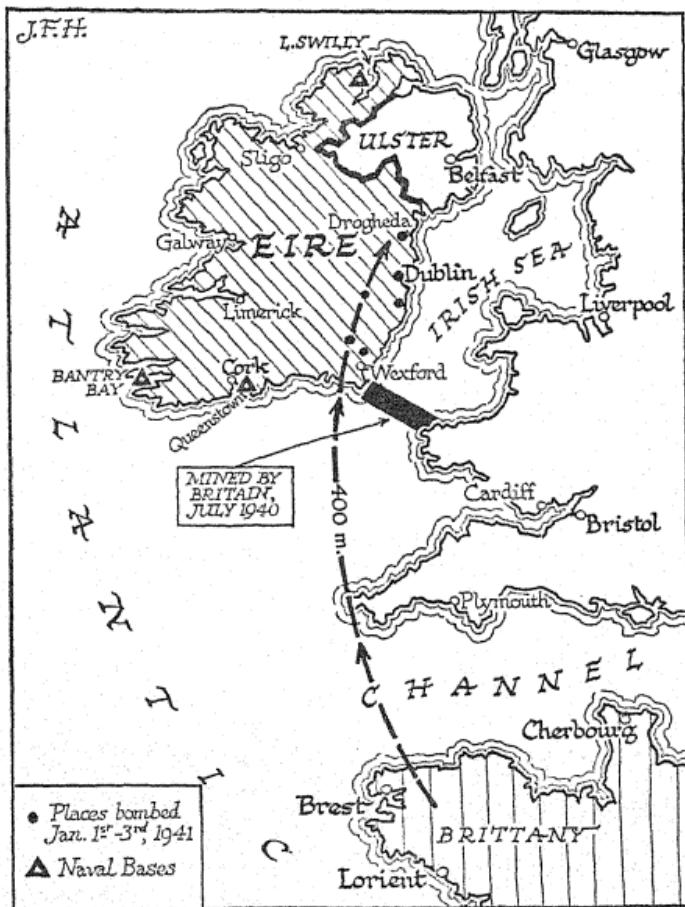
THE field of operations of the R.A.F. during the whole period from July 1940 to the end of the year ranged from the German-occupied ports and aerodromes of Norway in the north, to the bomber-bases and oil stores of Bordeaux and the industrial cities of Italy in the south ; and from the submarine bases of Lorient and other Breton ports in the west, to Stettin, Berlin, and the Skoda Works in the east.



The Strategic Position of Eire—

With German U-boats and bombing 'planes threatening British shipping routes to and from America from north and south, the strategic importance of Eire and its naval bases fronting the Atlantic became ever more apparent. Up to 1938 Britain had retained the right to use the Irish naval bases: 1. Lough Swilly in the north; 2. Bantry Bay in the south-west; 3. Queenstown on the south coast. But in that year an agreement was signed by which Great Britain renounced all claim on the bases; and accordingly only the ports of Ulster, on the north-east of the island, are available for British use.

Mr. De Valera, however, firmly and repeatedly declined to depart from his attitude of absolute neutrality.



Air Activity over Eire—

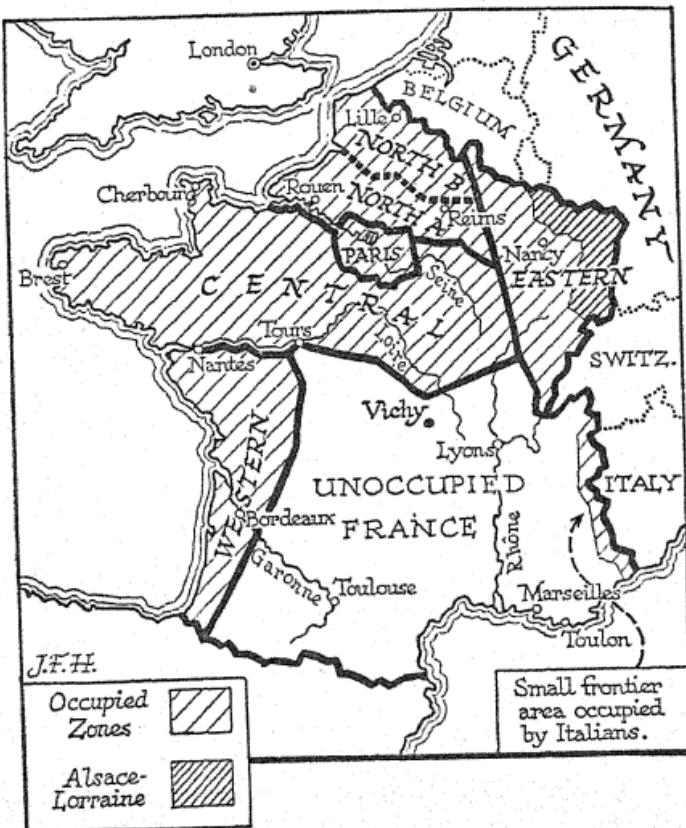
ON 1st August an Irish steamer was attacked by a German bomber off the coast of Co. Cork. On the 20th a German 'plane crashed in Co. Kerry and the crew was interned. On the 26th bombs were dropped in four places in Co. Wexford, and three people were killed. On 17th September, an Irish ship was bombed off Waterford. On 26th October, bombs were dropped in open country in Co. Wicklow. On 20th December, two bombs were dropped in Co. Dublin, and several bombs in Co. Monaghan. On 29th December, an unidentified 'plane flew over Lough Swilly and was fired on, and two hours later a military 'plane flew over Dublin. On the first three nights of 1941 bombs were dropped near Drogheda, on the Curragh (south-west of Dublin), at Enniskerry (south of Dublin), in Co. Wexford, and on one of the most thickly populated districts of Dublin itself.



The French Fleet: Oran—

SPEAKING in Parliament on 25th June Mr. Churchill, after describing the events which had led to Britain's ally, France, suing for a separate peace with Germany, said : " Many solemn assurances had been given that the Fleet would never be allowed to fall into German hands. It was therefore with grief and amazement that I read Article 8 of the armistice terms. . . . From this text it is clear that the French war vessels pass into German or Italian hands while fully armed."

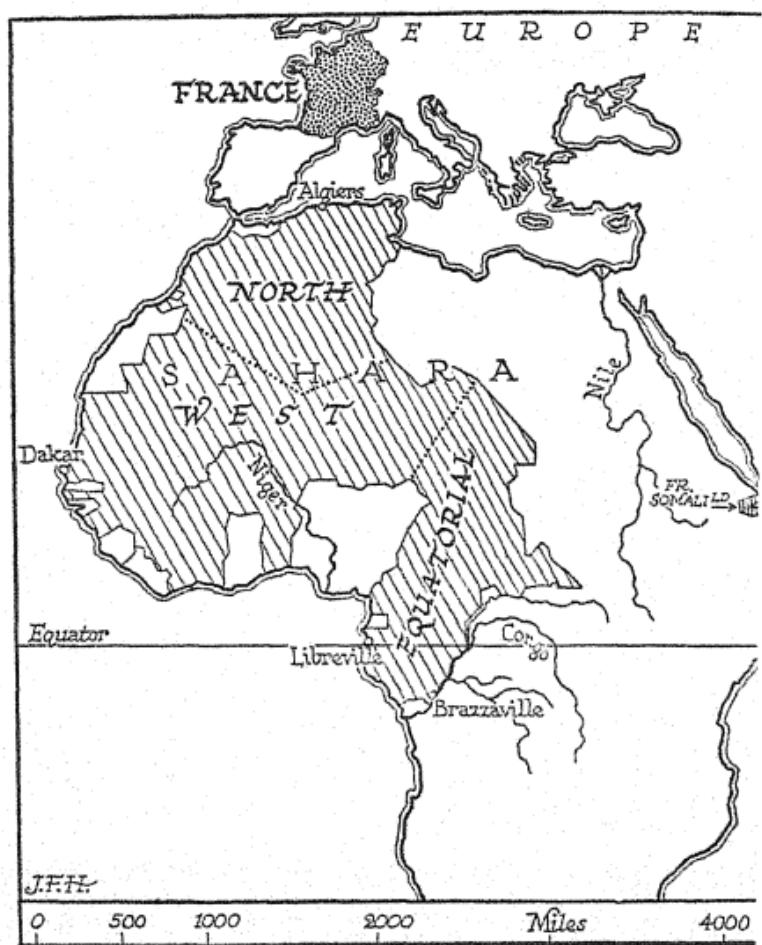
A few days later he announced " with sincere sorrow " that Britain had been compelled to take measures to prevent this. French warships lying in the harbours of Portsmouth, Plymouth, and Sheerness had been seized. So also had other French vessels at Alexandria. But two battle cruisers, with other battleships, light cruisers, destroyers and submarines in the harbour at Oran (Algeria) had refused to accept any of the alternatives put to them by the British Government ; and a British battle squadron under Vice-Admiral Somerville had thereupon opened fire on the French ships. Many of these were sunk or damaged. Only one large battle cruiser managed to slip out of harbour and sail for Toulon.



Occupied France—

GERMAN-OCCUPIED France has for purposes of administration been divided into six zones—North (A and B), Central, Western, Eastern, and the Paris Region. Each zone has special regulations controlling the movements of its inhabitants and of refugees. The North B and Eastern zones have been completely closed—no French subject not already there may enter them. The Central and Paris zones are nominally open for the return of former residents, but there are numerous restrictions, and at times the frontier between occupied and unoccupied France has been completely closed.

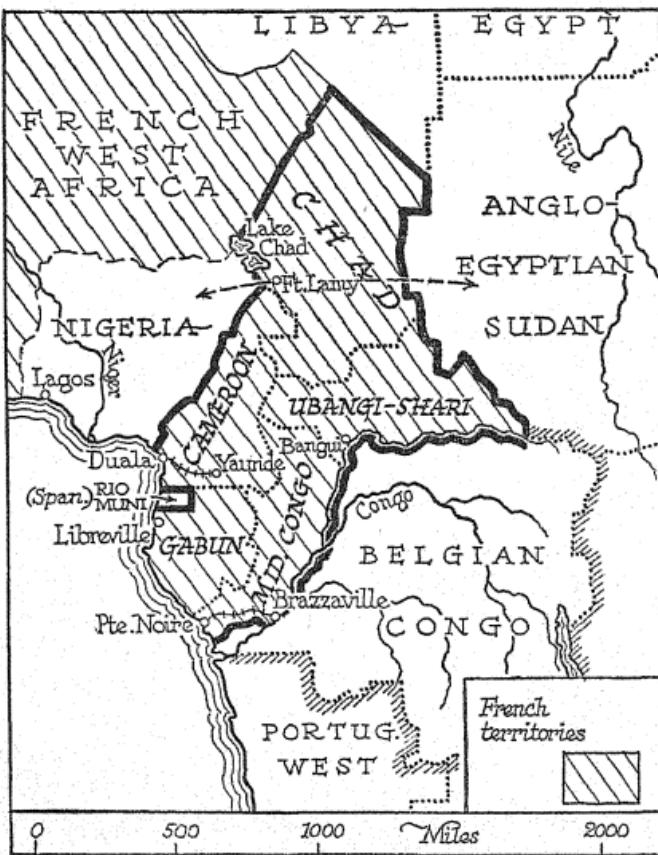
It has been rumoured that one of the secret clauses in the armistice terms ceded Alsace and Lorraine to Germany. At any rate a complete Germanization of those provinces has already begun. A map published in the pro-German *Paris-Soir* showed France divided into three zones : (1) the present unoccupied area ; (2) the Central and Western zones ; and (3) the North and Eastern zones ; and this may indicate that the latter region is to become part of Germany, while the Central and Western will remain under some form of German control.



The French Empire in Africa—

FRENCH AFRICA, exclusive of Madagascar, covers more than four million square miles, with something over thirty million inhabitants—three-fourths of the population of France itself. It is divided into three main zones : (1) French North Africa—Morocco, Algeria, and Tunis ; (2) French West Africa, comprising the seven colonies of Mauritania, French Sudan, Senegal, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Dahomey, and Niger, the administrative centre of the whole area being Dakar ; (3) French Equatorial Africa, the colonies of Gabun, Middle Congo, Ubangi-Shari, and Chad, with the mandated territory of Cameroon. This last has been a unitary area since 1934, with its headquarters at Brazzaville.

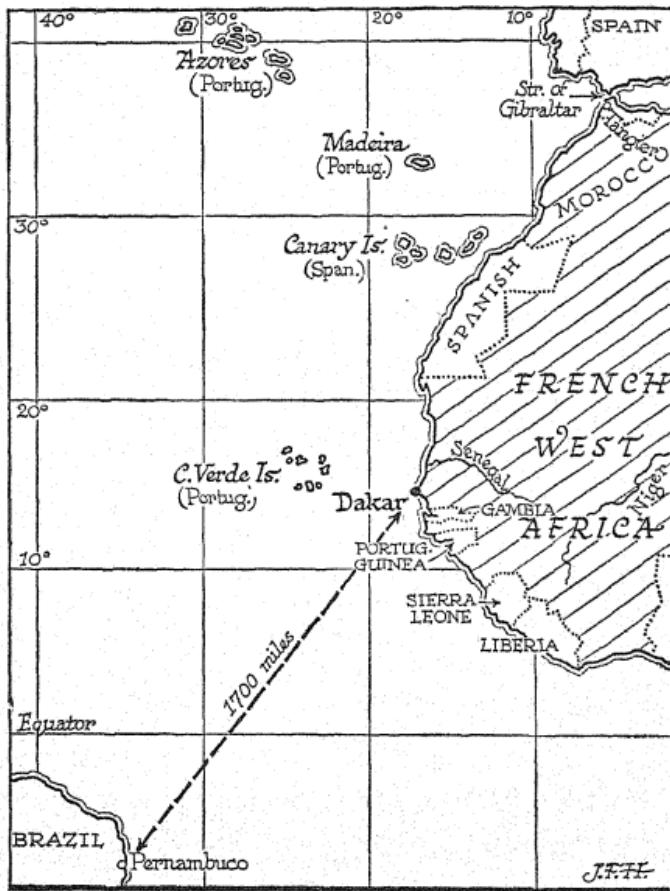
In October General Weygand was sent by the Vichy Government to Morocco, where he was reported to be “working to consolidate French strength in North Africa.”



French Equatorial Africa declares for De Gaulle—

It was announced on 29th August, that French Equatorial Africa and the mandated territory of Cameroon had declared for General de Gaulle. The strategic advantage of this to the Allied cause lay in the fact that the Chad Territory links British Nigeria with the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, thus opening up a direct road route between the two territories (passing through Fort Lamy) ; and further, in safeguarding communications, through Pointe Noire and Brazzaville, with the Belgian Congo.

On October-November, after the Dakar episode (see next map), General de Gaulle toured the Cameroon and Chad territory, but encountered some opposition in Gabun. Libreville, however, surrendered to his forces on 10th November, without loss of life on either side.



The Affair at Dakar—

ON 23rd September, General de Gaulle, leader of the Free French Forces, arrived at Dakar, the administrative centre of French West Africa and a port and air base of first-class strategic importance, and summoned its inhabitants to rally to his cause. In reply the shore batteries opened fire on the British ships accompanying him ; and French battleships and cruisers, which had been allowed to pass the Strait of Gibraltar and proceed to Dakar, also took part in the resistance. The fire was returned from the British ships, and two French submarines were sunk.

The British Government thereupon ordered a withdrawal, and announced later that as soon as it became clear that the capture of Dakar could only be achieved by a major operation of war, it was decided to break off hostilities, "as it had never been the intention of H.M. Government to enter into serious warlike operations against those Frenchmen who felt it their duty to obey the commands of the Vichy Government." Obviously General de Gaulle had been misinformed as to the strength of his supporters in West Africa.

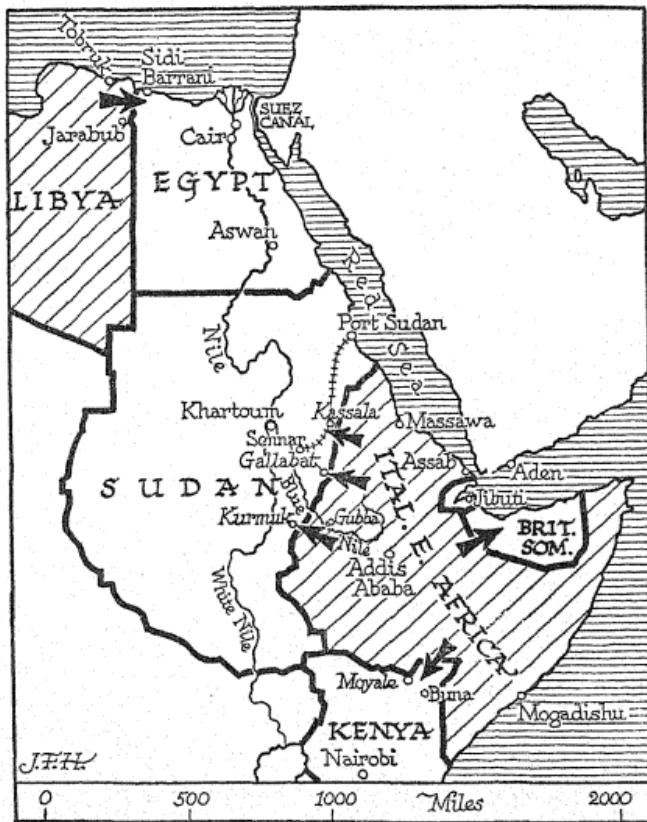
(169)



Syria—

THE French mandated territory of Syria became of obvious strategic importance as soon as the war spread to the Mediterranean. After the surrender of France the French authorities in Syria at first declared their intention of continuing the struggle; but a flying visit from General Weygand changed the situation. The British Government at once issued a declaration that in no circumstances would it permit the occupation of Syria or the Lebanon by any hostile Power. Shortly after, the oil pipeline to Tripoli was diverted to Haifa.

In September it was reported that an Italian Mission had arrived in Beirut, and was demanding the cession of sea and air bases. Meantime the repatriation of French reservists was proceeding. On 25th November, the Vichy Government appointed M. Chiappe as High Commissioner, but the aeroplane in which he travelled from France was shot down off Sardinia and he was killed. He was succeeded by General Dentz, who was reputed to have been placed by Vichy under the direct orders of General Weygand.

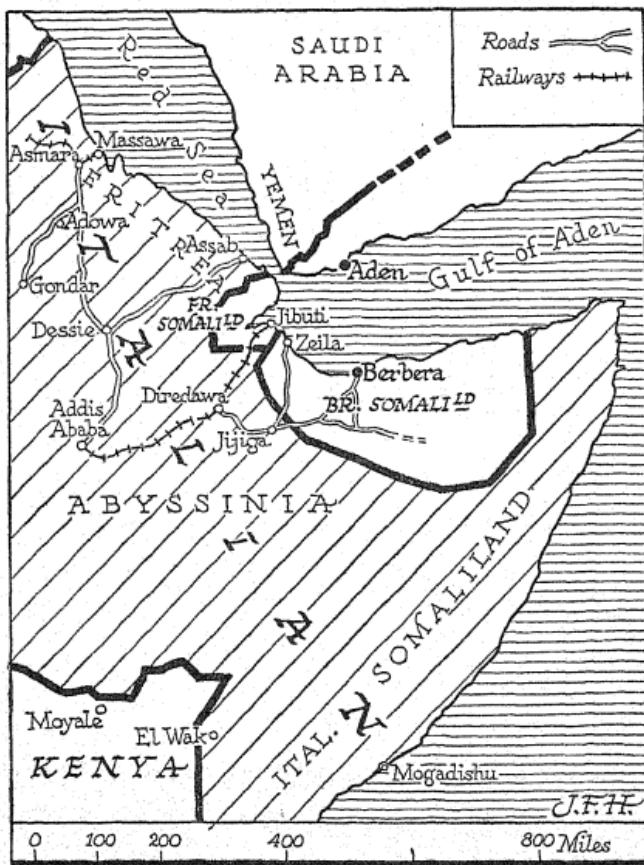


Italian Attacks on the Sudan—

In July, 1940, Italian forces operating from Abyssinia crossed the Sudanese frontier at three points, and occupied the towns of Kassala (on the Sennar-Port Sudan railway), Gallabat, farther south, and Kurmuk. But the expected further advance on Khartoum never materialized. Gallabat was retaken in November, and a British attack in the Kurmuk area later in the year was carried as far as Gubba, some miles within the Abyssinian border.

In July-August, the Italians pushed in to the north-eastern corner of Kenya, capturing Moyale and Buna. These places were retaken by General Smuts' forces in January, 1941.

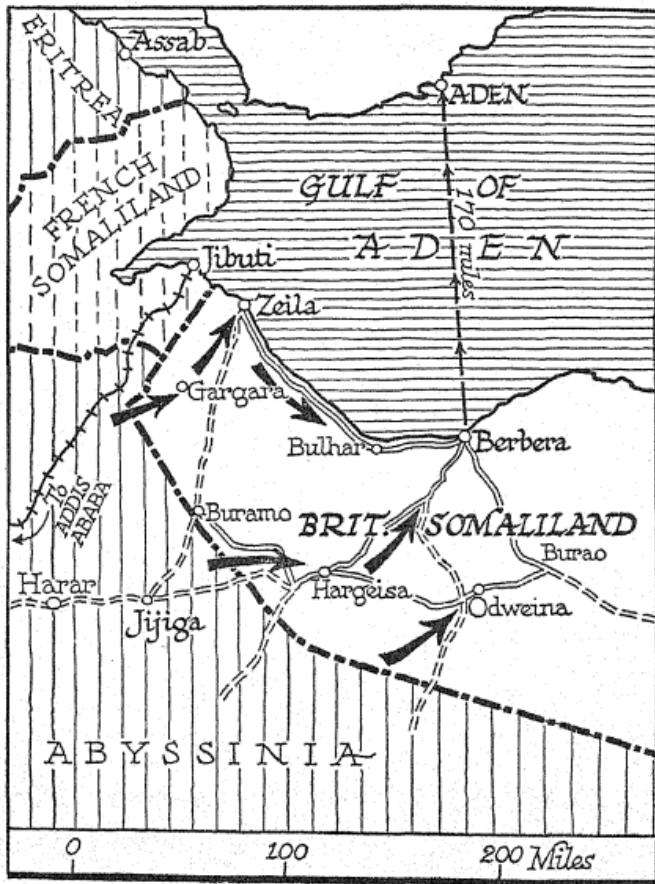
The strongest Italian offensive was directed against British Somaliland (see following maps).



The Campaign in British Somaliland (1)—

THE colonies of French and British Somaliland formed small enclaves in the great block of Italian territory in East Africa. After the surrender of the French colony and its port of Jibuti, British Somaliland was left isolated, and its small defence force was incapable of withstanding a full-scale attack. The ports of Zeila and Berbera possessed no modern facilities, and there are no railways in the poor and mainly desert country.

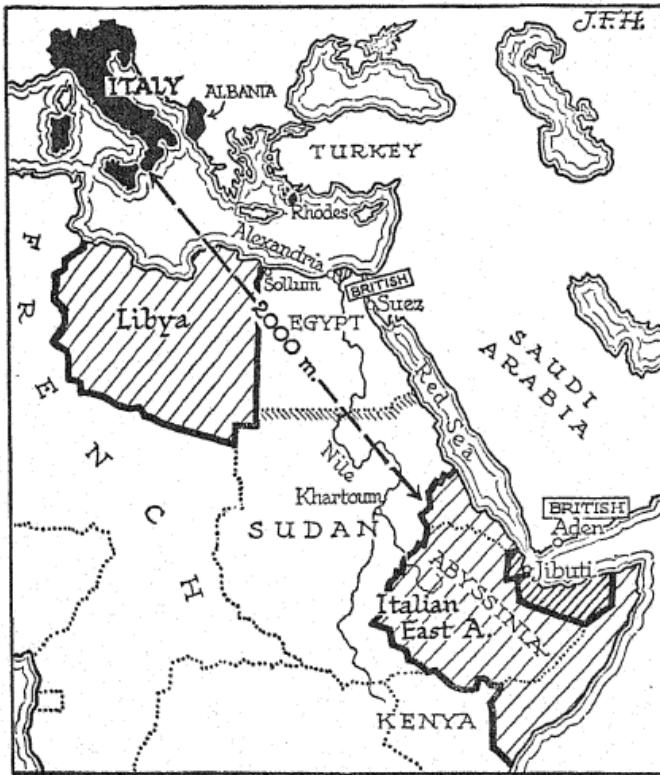
There had been large Italian forces in Abyssinia ever since the conquest of that country in 1936, and these were now employed for the advance into British territory.



The Campaign in British Somaliland (2)—

ON 4th August three Italian columns crossed the frontier of British Somaliland. The first entered the port of Zeila unopposed. The second, which included tanks, artillery, and aircraft, moved towards Hargeisa, which it captured on the 5th. On the following day the third column, with armoured fighting vehicles estimated at 2,000, occupied Odweina.

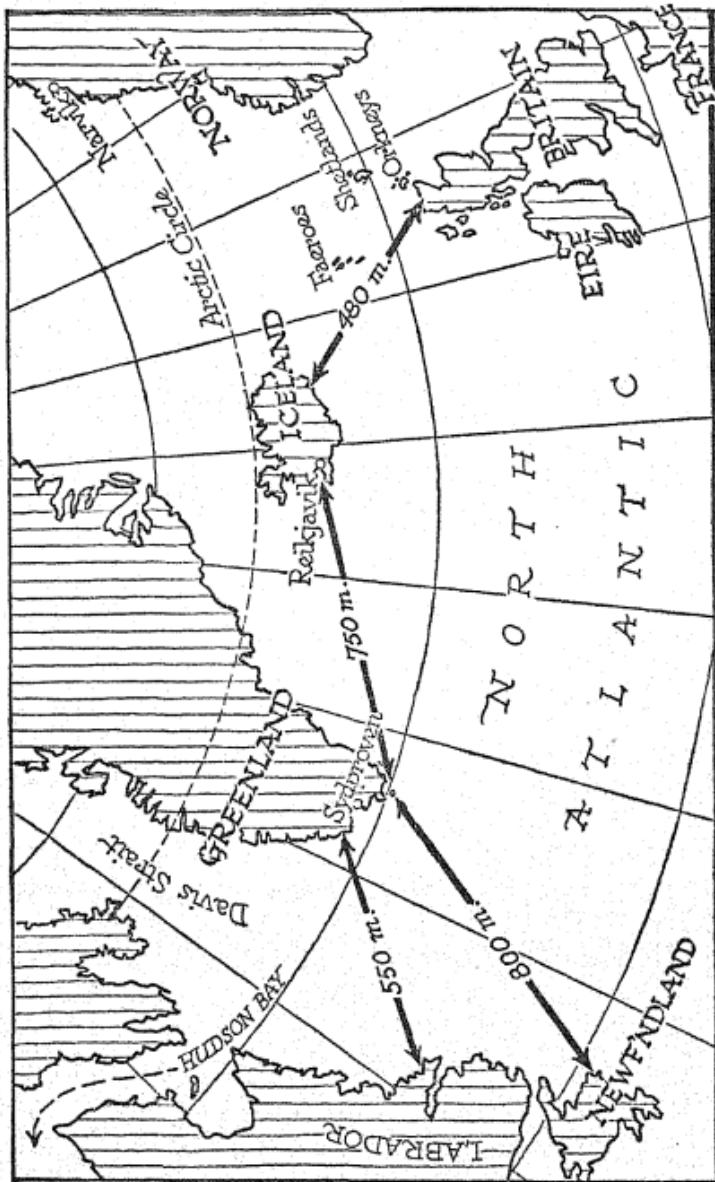
The first force then moved down the coast road from Zeila towards Berbera, while the other two advanced across mountain country towards Berbera from the south. There was bitter fighting, but the small British force had to withdraw steadily towards the coast ; and on the 19th it was evacuated from Berbera, with all its guns save two, and all its wounded, and transported safely to Aden. The British official statement claimed that “ enemy losses, particularly amongst Blackshirt units, have been heavy and out of all proportion to our own.”



Red Sea and Gulf of Aden—

THE Italian occupation of British and French Somaliland made little material difference to the general position in East Africa. The whole area was still cut off from direct communication with Italy by the British hold on Suez, and although the British withdrawal entailed a blow to our prestige in the surrounding countries, Britain's continued control of sea-routes in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden was the effective factor in the situation as a whole.

There was relative quiet along the Sudanese and Kenya frontier, broken only by clashes between patrols, until the end of the year. Then, in January, Imperial forces began an advance into Eritrea and—in conjunction with Abyssinian patriots—into Abyssinia.



The North Atlantic—

THE effectiveness of Germany's war on British shipping was enormously strengthened by her occupation of the French and Norwegian ports, which gave her submarine and bomber bases directly fronting the Atlantic. Her U-boats attacked passenger as well as merchant shipping,* sinking the *Arandora Star*, which carried German and Italian internees bound from Britain to Canada in July, and two evacuee ships conveying British children during September. On 26th October the 42,000-ton liner, *Empress of Britain*, was set on fire by a German bomber off the north coast of Eire.

Early in July the Admiralty announced the mining of waters between the Orkneys and Iceland, and Iceland and Greenland. The bringing of Greenland into the war zone helped to accelerate the steady change in American opinion about the war. A passionate and almost unanimous belief in isolation was gradually giving way to the realization that a Nazi victory would directly threaten the safety of the United States.

* For British shipping losses see Diagram 154.



The United States and the War—

ON 18th August it was announced that the United States and Canadian Governments had agreed to set up a Permanent Joint Defence Board, which would "consider in a broad sense the defence of the northern half of the Western Hemisphere." A day or two later Mr. Churchill stated that Britain was prepared to lease naval bases to the United States. Early in September, President Roosevelt announced the forthcoming transfer to Britain of fifty over-age destroyers. On 5th November Mr. Roosevelt was elected President of the United States for the third time. Two weeks later came the publication of the agreement between the American and British Governments for the leasing of bases to America. These are situated in Newfoundland, on the islands of Bermuda, Bahamas, Jamaica, Antigua, and St. Lucia, and on the coast of British Guiana. The Newfoundland and Bermuda bases were granted as gifts ; the others, which would form part of the defences of the Panama Canal zone, on ninety-nine-year leases.



German Raiders in the Atlantic—

It was reported in November that one of the German pocket-battleships was at large in the North Atlantic, and a little later came the news that it had attacked a convoy of thirty-eight vessels escorted by the armed merchant cruiser, H.M.S. *Jervis Bay*. Early in the action the *Jervis Bay*, after its commander had ordered the ships of the convoy to disperse, steered straight for the German raider, and by drawing its fire enabled thirty-two of the thirty-eight vessels to escape. She sank with her guns still firing at the enemy.

On 6th December the cruiser, *Carnarvon Castle*, engaged a raider 700 miles north-east of Montevideo, and two days later a German supply ship, out from Tampico, scuttled herself near Cuba on the approach of a British warship.

On 29th December a raider was shelled by a British cruiser in the North Atlantic and a supply ship sunk.



The U.S.S.R. gains Territories—

At the end of June the Rumanian Government bowed to an ultimatum from Soviet Russia, and ceded Bessarabia and northern Bukovina to the U.S.S.R. (Bessarabia had been Russian prior to 1919.)

In July the three Baltic States, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, decided to become Soviet Republics, and to seek admission to the Soviet Union. (These countries had been part of Tsarist Russia until 1918.)

The Soviet Union had thus acquired very considerable extensions of territory during the present war, without fighting, except in the case of Finland.

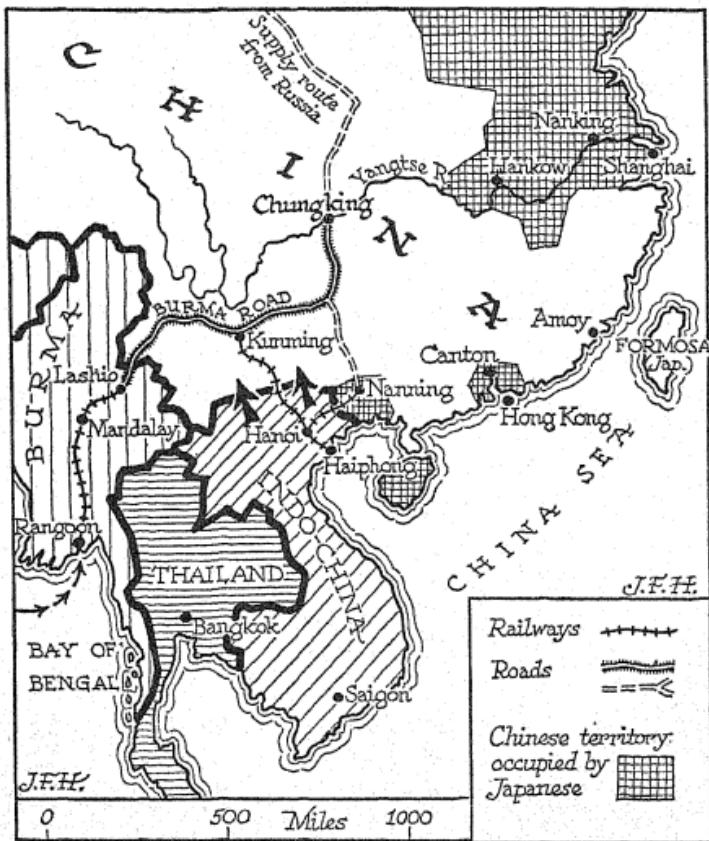


Spain and Tangier—

SPAIN's attitude of "non-belligerency" was maintained throughout the last six months of 1940. A trade agreement with Britain was signed in July, and an oil import agreement two months later.

Señor Suner (later the Spanish Foreign Minister) visited Berlin in September, and told the *Volkischer Beobachter* that Spain had her mission in the New Order in Europe, and that when the right moment came her leaders would give the order for action. General Franco met Hitler at the Spanish frontier on 23rd October.

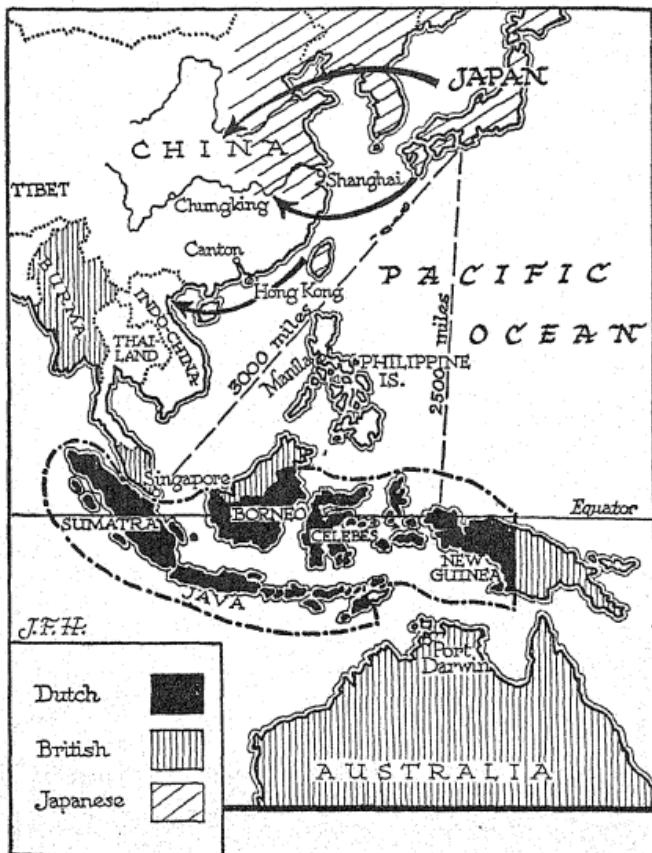
Already in June Spanish troops had occupied the International Zone of Tangier, and on 4th November the Spanish commandant in Tangier announced that the Zone had ceased to exist and appointed himself Governor of the area. A little later Madrid announced that the Zone had been incorporated in Spanish Morocco.



Japan, the Burma Road, and Indo-China—

IN July Mr. Churchill stated in Parliament that an agreement had been reached with Japan whereby Britain would suspend for a period of three months the transit of arms and ammunition, either from Burma, *via* the Burma Road, to Kunming and Chungking, or *via* Hong Kong. In September Japan joined the Axis, and a Ten Years' Pact between Germany, Italy, and Japan was signed in Berlin. On 8th October Mr. Churchill announced that the Burma Road would be reopened.

Japan had already brought pressure to bear on the French authorities in Indo-China. Japanese warships were massed off Haiphong, and Japanese troops occupied Hanoi. In possession of northern Indo-China the Japanese were thus able to bomb the Burma Road on its reopening ; as well as to block the railway communications between Indo-China and south-western China.



The Dutch Empire in the East—

JAPAN's pact with Germany and her aggressive action in French Indo-China at once raised the question of Japanese intentions with regard to the Dutch East Indies, Holland's vast and economically valuable empire in the Far East. The islands, extending some 3,000 miles from west to east, have become more than ever important during recent years as a result of the development of rubber and oil production. Strategically they are dependent on the great British naval base of Singapore, which, with the American base at Manila in the Philippines and the Australian base at Port Darwin, makes up a triangle of key positions west, north, and south. Frontier "incidents" between Thailand (Siam) and Indo-China, whether or not they have been encouraged by Japan, might well lead to arbitration by Japan, and so to an extension of her influence in Thailand—in the rear of Singapore.



The Break-up of Rumania (1)—

RUMANIA very considerably extended her territories after the First World War (see map). But the high proportion of racial minorities within her new frontiers—six millions out of some twenty millions—did not make for internal stability.

In July, 1940, the Rumanian Government renounced the Anglo-French guarantee of April, 1939. At the same time it acquiesced in the Russian demand for Bessarabia (Russian before 1919) and part of Bukovina, which the U.S.S.R. demanded “as compensation.” In August it agreed to the recession of southern Dobruja to Bulgaria.
(Continued on next map.)



The Break-up of Rumania (2)—

MEANTIME negotiations had been proceeding with Hungary for the return to that country of Transylvania. The discussions were finally transferred to Vienna, German and Italian representatives taking part. On 30th August an agreement was signed by which a large area of Transylvanian territory was given up by Rumania.

There was widespread unrest, and six days later King Carol abdicated. General Antonescu became Premier, and the Iron Guard, the Rumanian Fascist organization, was declared the sole legal and political party. British subjects were arrested, and German aviators and S.S. men were reported to have arrived in the country. The most important oil companies were taken over by the state. During October German troops were stationed at strategic points throughout the country, which became in effect a German military protectorate. On 23rd November, in Berlin, the Rumanian Premier signed his country's adhesion to the Axis Three-Power-Pact.



Hungary—

AIDED by Axis pressure on Rumania, Hungary had now regained a large part of the territory she lost in 1919. She had previously occupied (see map) considerable areas of Slovakia and Ruthenia—the south-eastern and eastern parts of Czechoslovakia.

On 20th November Hungary formally joined the Axis.



The Encirclement of Yugoslavia—

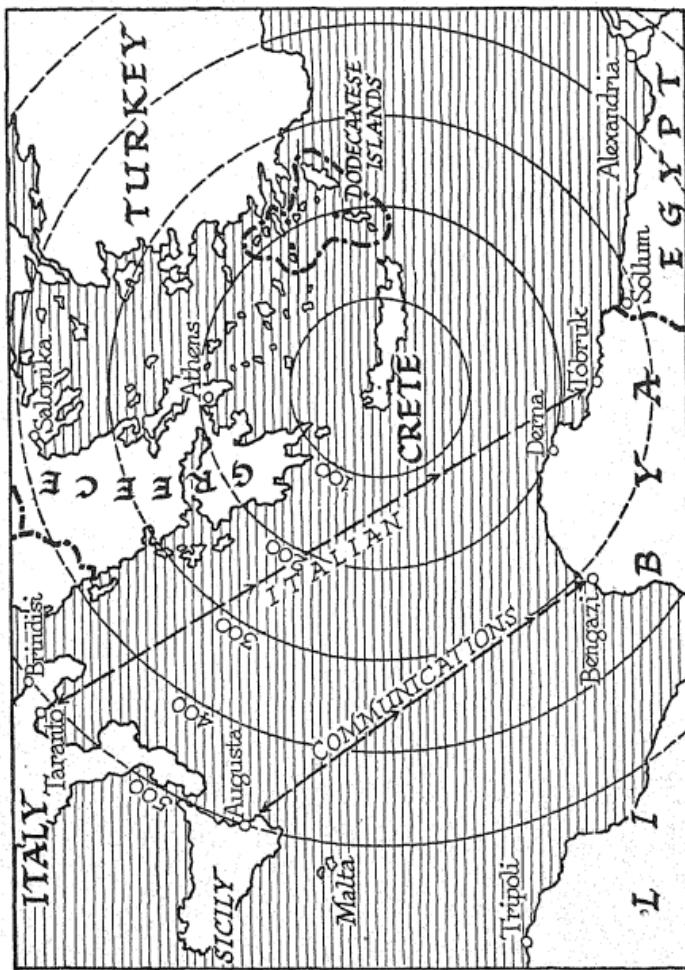
THE extension of German domination along the lower Danube, through Hungary and Rumania, virtually completed the encirclement of Yugoslavia. The Government of that country had constantly reiterated its intention of remaining neutral in the present struggle, and it repeated this declaration on the outbreak of the Italo-Greek war. The Danube flows through the north-eastern corner of Yugoslavia, and this alone makes it inevitable that Germany will continue to take a close interest in the country. But the victorious Greek offensive in Albania and the extension of British sea-power into the Adriatic are also factors in the situation.



Italy declares War on Greece—

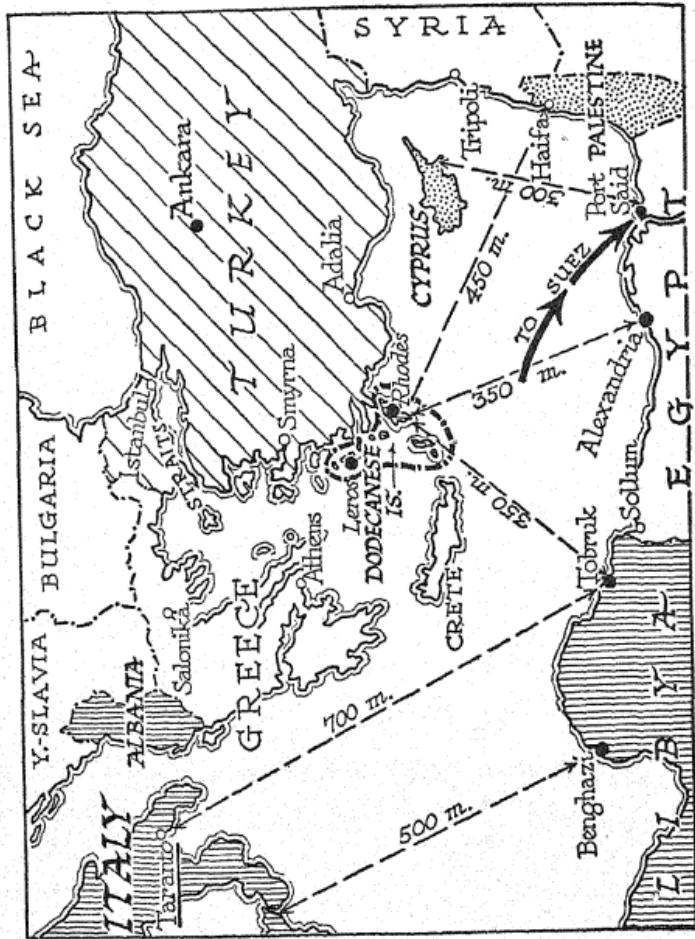
ON 28th October the Italian Government sent a three-hour ultimatum to Greece, and at 6 a.m. that morning Italian troops crossed the Greek frontier. For months the Italian Press had been accusing the Greeks of encouraging rebellion in Albania, and demanding that Greece should renounce the British guarantee. During August a Greek steamer had been torpedoed by an Italian submarine off Greece and a Greek cruiser, the *Helle*, was torpedoed while anchored off an Aegean island.

The Italian offensive which opened the war struck across the southern Albanian frontier into the north-western Greek province of Epirus. (For further campaign see Map 143.)



Crete: A New British Air Base—

IMMEDIATELY upon the entry of Greece into the war Britain was able to lend her active assistance, and naval and Fleet Air Arm units were at once in action. The Greek island of Crete became of the first importance, since it provided both sea and air bases for the harassing of Italian communications with Libya, and the bombing of the southern Italian and Albanian ports. Its possession also went far to neutralize the Italian occupation of the Dodecanese Islands.



The Eastern Mediterranean: Taranto—

DURING the months before the Italian declaration of war on Greece the position in the eastern Mediterranean had developed steadily in favour of Britain. The French fleet at Alexandria was disarmed early in July, and later in that month Britain took full military control of the Suez Canal.

On 19th July the Australian cruiser *Sydney* sank the Italian cruiser *Bartomeo Colleoni* north-west of Crete. At the beginning of September and again at the end of the month British warships combed the central and eastern Mediterranean in an effort to bring the Italian fleet to action, but were unable to find it.

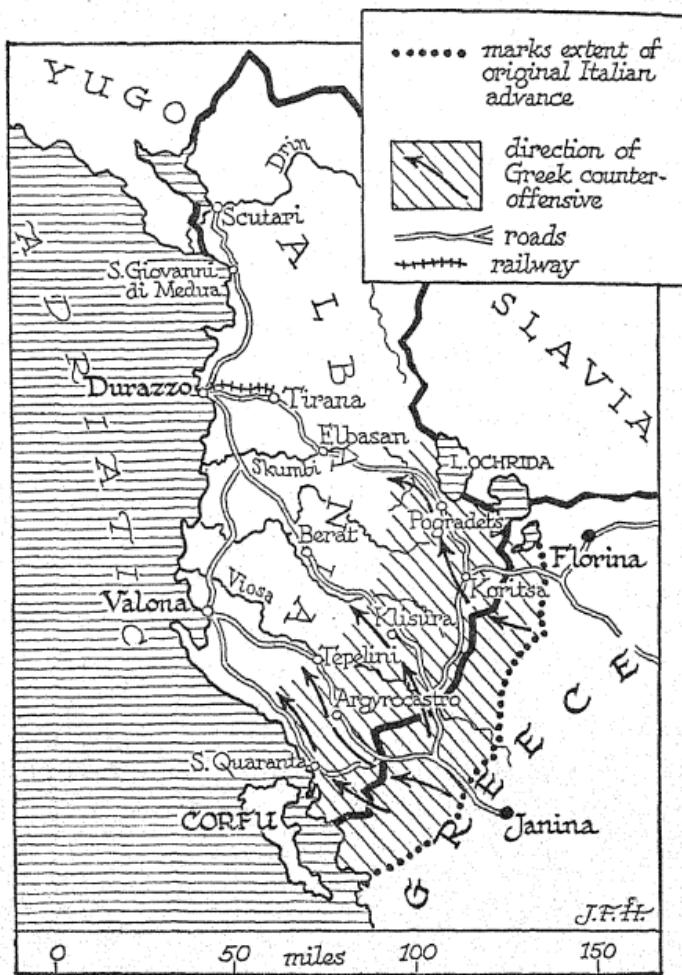
On 13th November the Fleet Air Arm achieved one of the greatest successes of the war when, in an attack on the naval base of Taranto, its bombers put three of Italy's six battleships out of action.



Albania—

WHEN the remnants of the Turkish Empire in Europe were parcelled out among the victorious Balkan countries after the first Balkan War, 1912 (see map), a new state was set up on the eastern shore of the Adriatic—Albania. After the First World War Italy gradually consolidated a virtual protectorate over the country. In May, 1939, Mussolini ordered its occupation, and its ruler, King Zog, went into exile. Reports of revolts on the part of the people against Italian rule have been frequent.

Albania is a mountainous country, its rivers little more than torrents, dry in summer. Its area is just over 10,000 square miles (Wales has 7,466 square miles).



The Greek Advance in Albania—

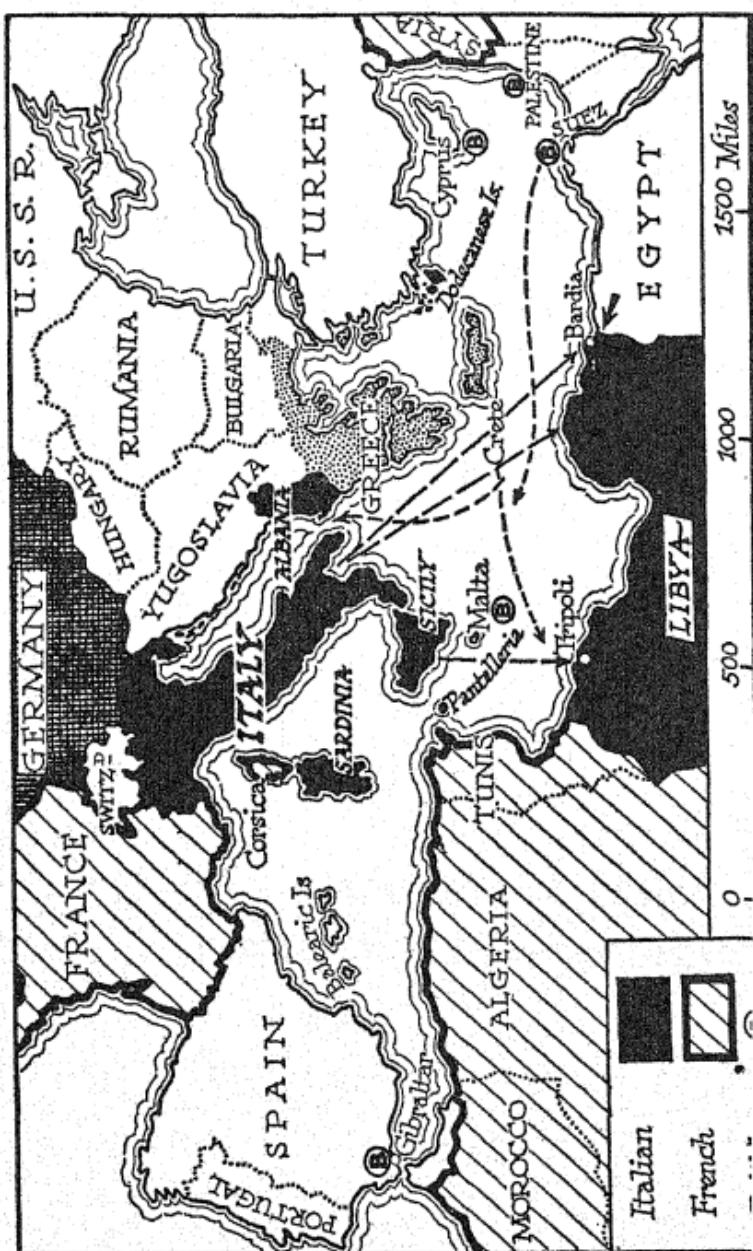
THE Italian advance across the Greek frontier (28th October) aimed at the towns of Florina and Janina, at either extremity of the frontier line. The Greeks soon took the offensive in the Florina sector, and shelled Koritsa. In the centre and on their left they withdrew, and the Italians pushed forward along the coast. But in a few days' time the Greeks were successfully counter-attacking everywhere, and taking increasing numbers of prisoners. On 21st November the Greek *communiqué* said that in the Janina sector their troops had smashed the enemy on a wide front, and on the same day their right wing entered Koritsa, rapidly advancing thence to Pogradets. On 4th December Santi Quaranta and Argyrocastro fell. Severe weather slowed down the advance, which nevertheless continued in the direction of Valona, in the coast sector, and Elbasan, on the northern wing.

Throughout the whole advance the R.A.F. lent vigorous aid by bombing the Italian bases, as well as numerous key points in the fighting zone.



Italian Communications with Albania—

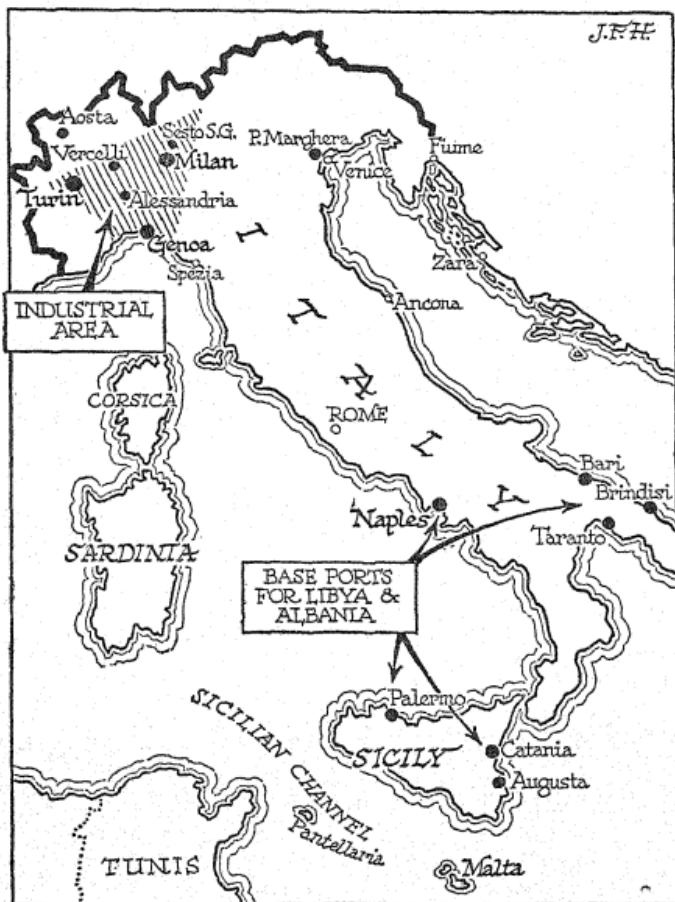
THE Italian lines of supply to Albania ran from the ports of Bari and Brindisi to Durazzo and Valona. All these ports were constantly bombed by the R.A.F., and during November a British naval squadron attacked Italian supply ships in the Strait of Otranto, sinking one and setting two on fire. On 18th December a British cruiser, with a destroyer force, swept the Adriatic as far north as Bari-Durazzo, without encountering enemy shipping. The same night British battleships heavily bombarded Valona.



The Mediterranean Situation—

THE Italian declaration of war on Greece certainly did not affect the general situation in the Mediterranean in Italy's favour. The use of the Greek island bases by the British Navy and Air Force went some way to offset the disadvantage at which Britain was placed by the surrender of France, and the consequent loss of the Syrian and Tunisian bases. The direct Italian lines of supply to eastern Libya became all the more open to attack ; and the shorter route from Sicily to Tripoli necessitated a long overland journey along the Libyan coast to the Egyptian frontier (*cf.* Map 147).

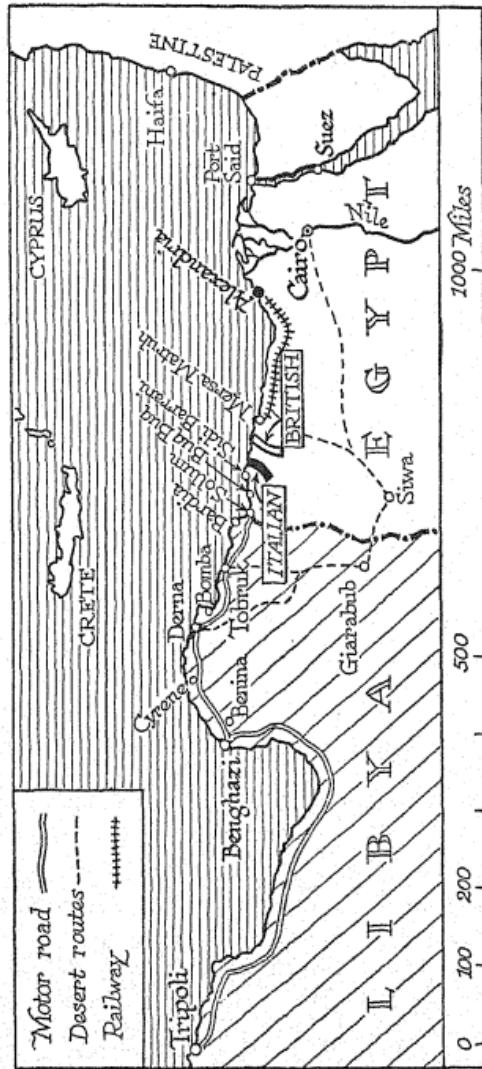
Malta, the British base in the centre of the sea, has withstood repeated bombing attacks ever since Italy came into the war in June. In the latter part of January, 1941, after German air bases had been established in Sicily, these raids were intensified ; and the British War Cabinet sent a special message of congratulation to the people and the garrison of the island on their gallantry.



Air Raids on Italy—

R.A.F. RAIDS on Italy, up to the Italian invasion of Greece, had been confined to the towns of the industrial north—Milan, Turin, Genoa. With the establishment of British air bases on the Greek islands there began a systematic bombing of the ports of southern Italy and Sicily, the supply bases for Albania and Libya.

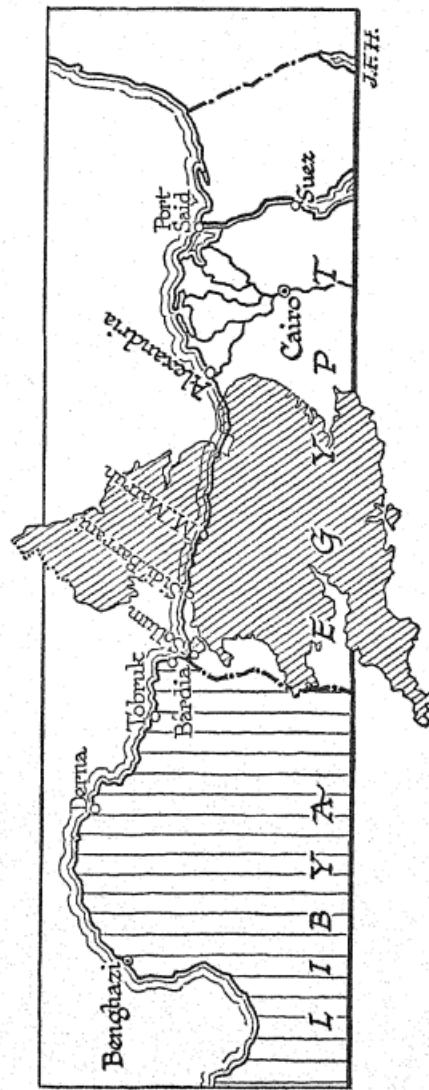
In January it was learned that German aviators and machines were installed in Sicily. On 10th January a heavy dive-bombing attack was made on a British convoy in the Sicilian Channel, damaging the aircraft-carrier *Illustrious* and a destroyer, and setting on fire the cruiser *Southampton* (which had later to be sunk by our own forces). At least twelve bombers were shot down and one Italian destroyer sunk.



The Campaign in Egypt and Libya (I)—

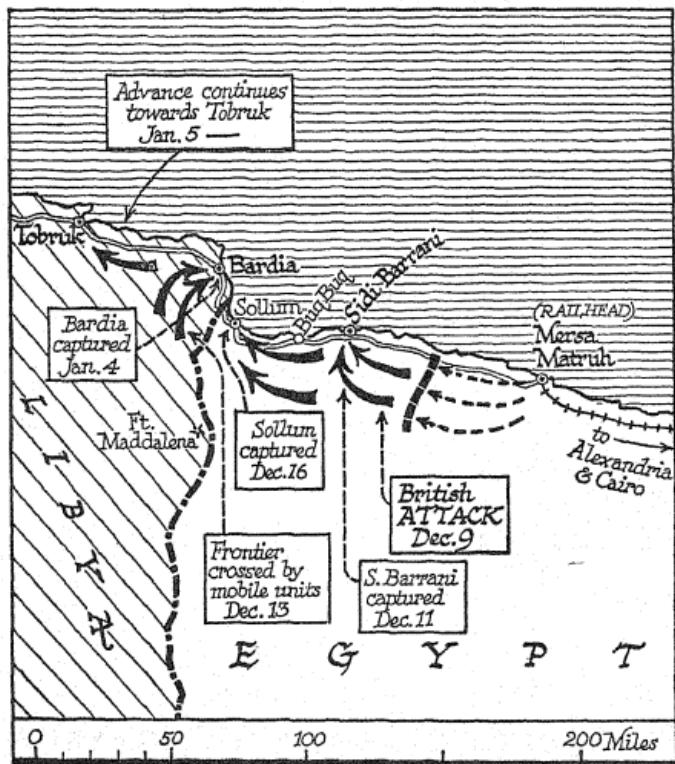
ALTHOUGH the Italians had been massing troops on the Egyptian frontier throughout August no advance was made until the middle of September, when they crossed the frontier in force and occupied Sollum. The British fell back towards Mersa Matruh, and the Italians moved east to Sidi Barrani, where they consolidated their positions.

There was a long lull, during which the air forces on both sides were active, raiding front-line positions and lines of supply.



The Campaign in Egypt and Libya (2)—

THE fighting in Egypt-Libya had to take place on a comparatively narrow front, some thirty miles wide, near the coast, with extended lines of supply behind either combatant. Some idea of the area of the fighting zone can be gathered from this map, showing England and Wales drawn to the same scale.

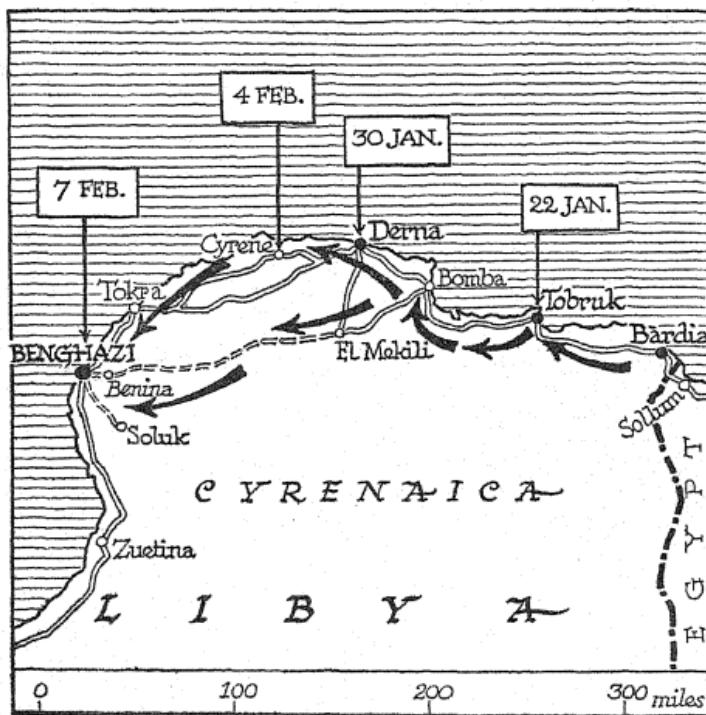


The Campaign in Egypt and Libya (3)—

ON 9th December the Imperial Army of the Nile moved forward from its positions in front of Mersa Matruh, and two days later entered Sidi Barrani, capturing upwards of 20,000 Italian prisoners. Warships of the Mediterranean Fleet co-operated by shelling Italian positions along the coast road. The advance went on through Buq Buq, where more prisoners were taken, bringing the total up to some 35,000, and on the 16th Sollum was captured. Egypt was now cleared of the enemy.

The Italian port and fortified position of Bardia was the next objective. British mechanized forces cut the road to Tobruk, and the Italian force in Bardia, reckoned at two divisions, was completely cut off. After a few days' preparation the town was carried by assault on January 4, 1941, and between 30,000 and 40,000 Italians taken prisoner. In all this fighting Australian forces played a leading part.

The advance continued towards Tobruk. (See next map.)



The Campaign in Egypt and Libya (4)—

TOBRUK was attacked on 21st January, and taken the following day, with 14,000 prisoners. Derna, over 100 miles west, was entered eight days later. On 7th February came the brief *communiqué* from G.H.Q., Cairo—"Benghazi is in our hands." Australian troops had advanced along the coast road from Derna, while a mechanized column moved rapidly across the desert track from El Makili, cutting the road from Benghazi southward. The whole of Cyrenaica, the eastern province of Libya, was now in British hands.

General Wavell's Army of the Nile had advanced more than 400 miles in less than two months, capturing 110,000 prisoners and enormous quantities of equipment and material. Benghazi itself is a naval and seaplane base of the first importance.

151

GERMAN
planes
lost
2122

Comparative air losses
Aug. 11 - Sept. 30

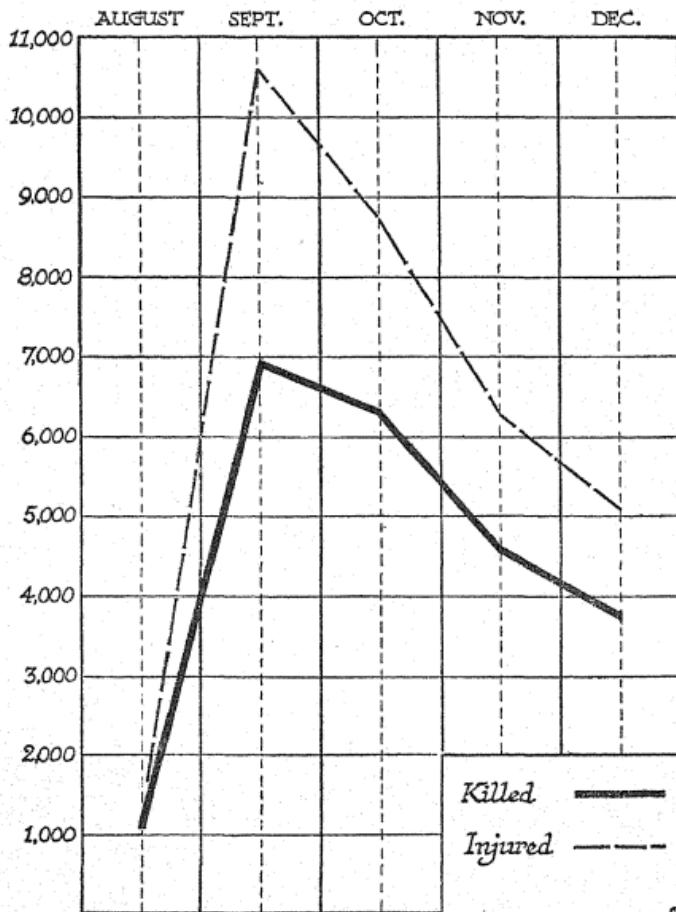
BRITISH
planes
lost
597

BRITISH
pilots
lost
283

Air Losses: August-September—

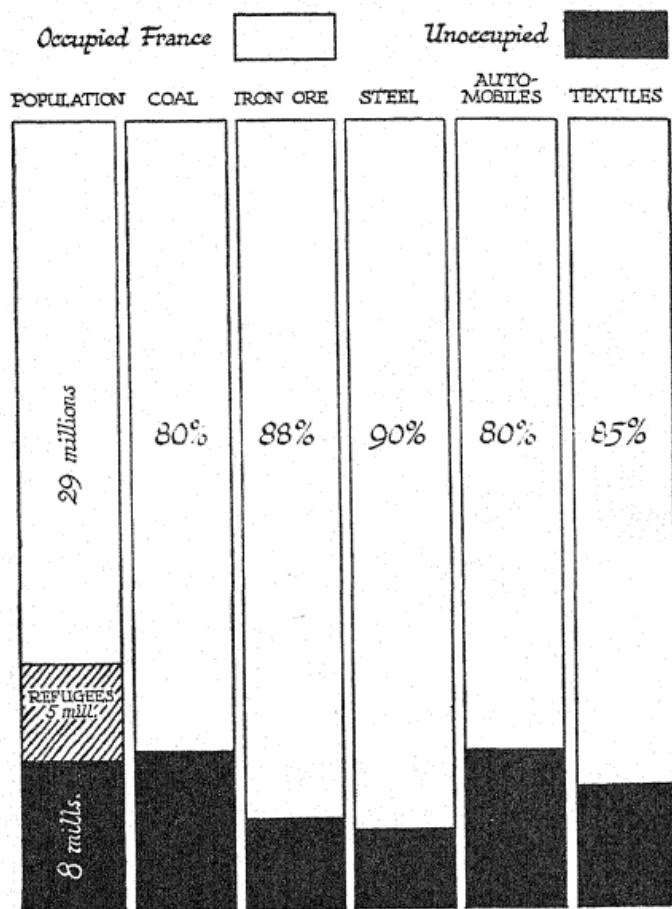
THE German mass daylight raids on Britain during August and September proved a costly failure for the Luftwaffe, as this diagram, based on Air Ministry reports, shows. And there is little doubt that the Air Ministry figures were understatements, since only those German machines were included as to the loss of which there was direct, tangible evidence. For example, the Ministry's figures for 15th September, the day of the greatest offensive, give 185 'planes destroyed ; but a few days later Air-Marshal Sir A. S. Barratt stated that at least 47 more (232 in all) were almost certainly brought down.

152



Civilian Casualties in Air Raids—

THE number of civilians—men, women, and children—killed in air raids over Britain reached its peak in September, the period of the most intensive night-bombing of London. Thenceforward there was a steady decline in the numbers both of killed and injured, to the end of the year.



For the material of this diagram I am indebted to *France and Britain*, published by the Anglo-French Co-operation Committee of the Fabian Society, 11 Dartmouth Street, S.W.1.

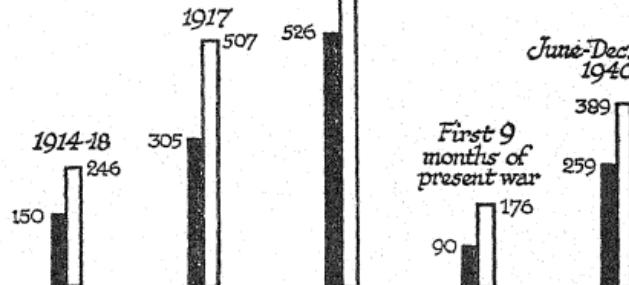
Occupied and Unoccupied France—

IN normal times unoccupied France had a population of about eight millions out of France's total of forty-two millions, and this population was increased by five to six million refugees from Northern France and from Belgium. Though France as a whole was normally self-sufficient in foodstuffs, very little of it was produced in what is now the occupied zone, where wine is the only surplus product. In coal, iron ore, steel, and textiles, the proportion between the two areas is as shown in the diagram ; and in addition the whole of French potash came from occupied areas. Only in bauxite, and in hydro-electric power, does the advantage lie with the south.

*MONTHLY AVERAGES
of SHIPPING LOSSES* —

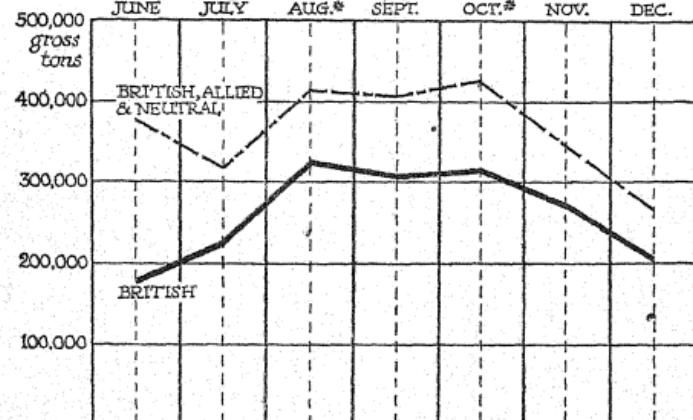
(Figures in '000 gross tons)

BRITISH BRITISH, ALLIED,
■ & NEUTRAL ■



ACTUAL LOSSES June-December, 1940

JUNE JULY AUG.* SEPT. OCT.* NOV. DEC. *5 weeks

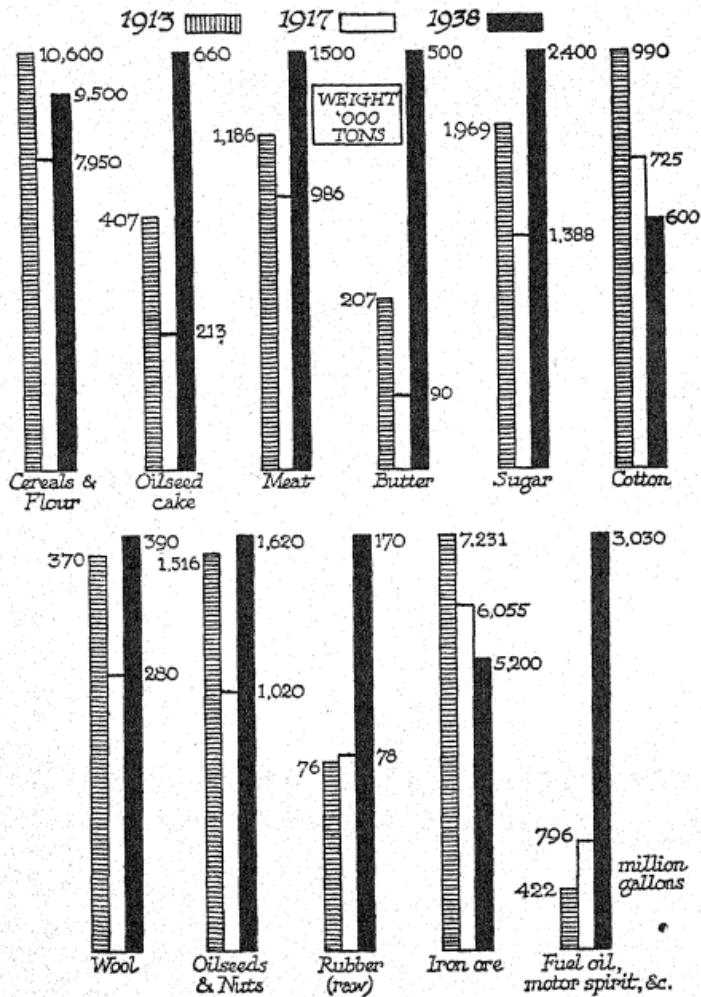


Allied Shipping

Losses—

SINCE the fall of France, which gave Germany submarine bases on the Atlantic coast, merchant shipping losses have risen sharply compared with the first nine months of the war. The monthly average for June to December 1940 was still below the monthly average for 1917, and well below the actual losses in April 1917 ; but our need to import, especially munitions, is much greater than it was then. Moreover, the convoy system did not start until May, 1917, whereas in this war it has been in operation from the beginning. And the convoys have now to contend against enemy bombers as well as the submarine.

The figures for losses in this war exclude those suffered by merchant ships in naval operations at Dunkirk and in other evacuations from France, which altogether amounted to 65,000 tons of British shipping and 122,000 tons for British, Allied, and neutral combined.



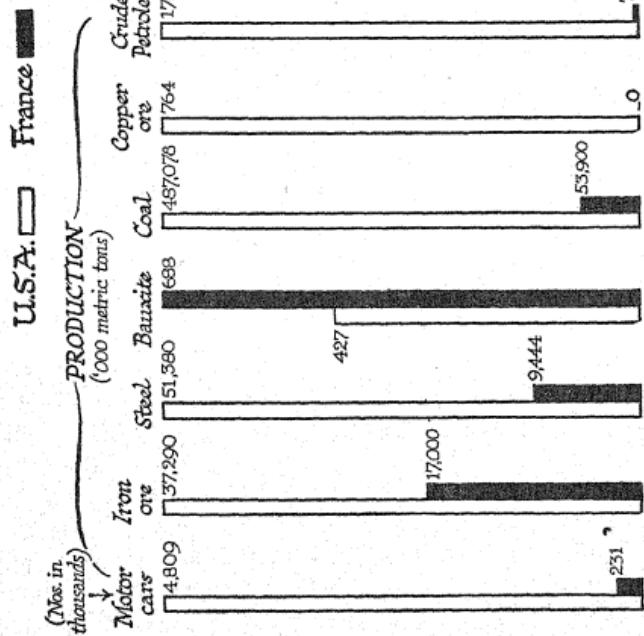
British Imports—

SHIPPING losses, together with the delays of the convoy system and the congestion at the ports, mean that we must not waste the reduced shipping tonnage on importing unessential things. This diagram shows how we had to curtail our imports of foodstuffs and even most of the important raw materials in 1917. The amount imported of the same commodities in 1938 is also given; and it is clear that if our imports of butter and meat, for instance, are only reduced to the 1917 level, it will mean a big drop compared with what we have been accustomed to obtain in recent years.

(160)

107

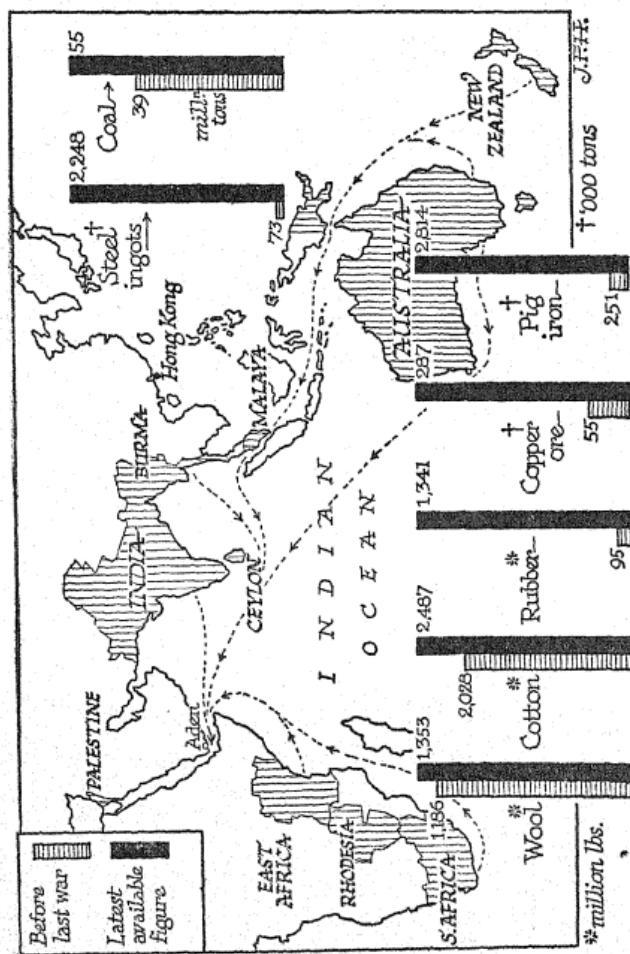
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American and French Industrial Strength—

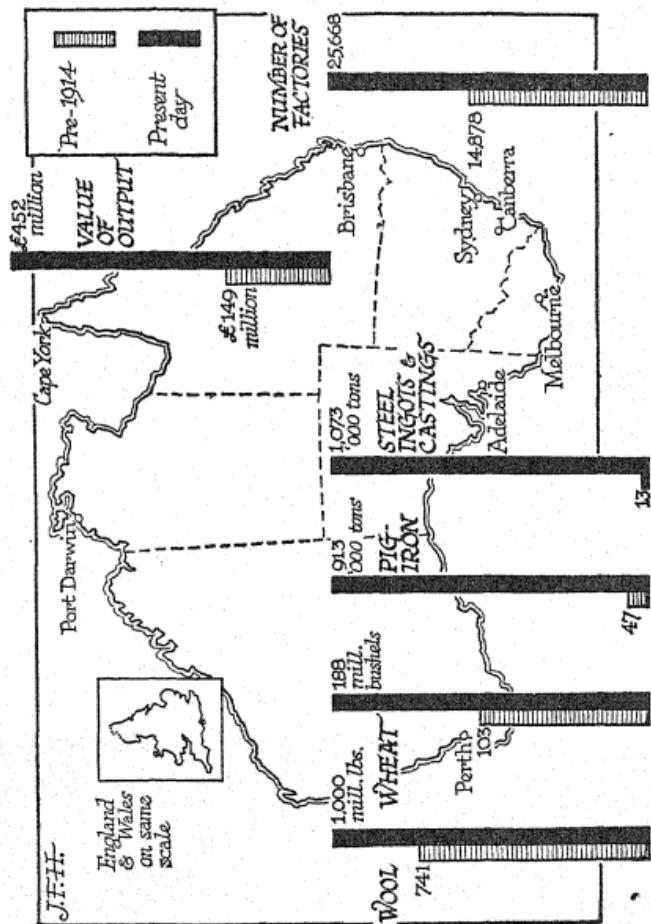
WHEN we lost France as an Ally, we also lost her industrial potential, a comparison of which with that of Great Britain and Germany was given in diagram 42, Volume I. Now, however, the industry of the United States is more and more being thrown in on our side, and this diagram shows how in almost every respect it dwarfs that of France.

The figures given are for the best year of the last decade, except for the shipping tonnage owned, which is for June 1939.



The Delhi Conference—

It is shipping difficulties which emphasize the great advantage we would have if we could supply our forces in the Middle East as much as possible from those parts of the Empire which lie east of Suez. Last November, representatives from South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Rhodesia, East Africa, Malaya, Ceylon, Hong Kong, Burma, and Palestine met in Delhi to consult with the Government of India on the best means of co-ordinating their economic resources. This diagram shows how the production of important commodities by the territories concerned has grown in the twenty-five years since 1913. In addition, the manufacturing industry of the Dominions, India, and Southern Rhodesia has greatly developed in the same period. Palestine and Hong Kong have also small but potentially useful manufacturing industries.



Australia—

HERE are shown the individual figures for Australia. The big increase in her production of pig-iron and steel is especially notable, and so is the growth of her manufacturing industries, which employed about 524,000 workers before this war, compared with 327,000 before 1914.

AN ATLAS-HISTORY OF
THE SECOND GREAT WAR—VOL. I

September 1939 to January 1940



Mr. Horrabin opens this first volume with a summary of the history of Germany from 1914-1939. The maps concerning Germany's "Encirclement," German minorities in Czechoslovakia, Poland, Rumania, etc., throw valuable light on problems which have been at the heart of European politics for the last fifty years. At the end of the book are diagrams which give further help to the study of the situation in 1939 : Raw Material of Germany, France, and Britain ; How far is Germany Self-sufficient ? Economic Strength of the Rival Powers ; Shipping Requirements of British Imports ; Canada—the Empire's Arsenal, etc.

The campaign in Poland ; the Russo-Finnish War ; the strategic importance of control of Baltic ; the Black Sea and the Straits ; the importance of America's Repeal of the Arms Embargo—here are a few of the vital questions of which this opening volume gives clear and objective analysis. "Very little delusive propaganda could survive measurement against these eloquent pictures."—*Time and Tide*.

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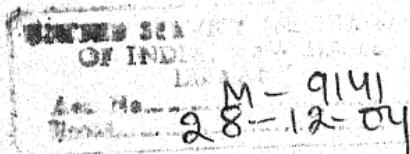
Covering the spring and summer of 1940, this volume sets out clearly in map and diagram the story of Nazi aggression in Norway and the Netherlands. Our own campaign in Norway, the overrunning of Denmark, Holland, and Belgium by the armies of the Reich, the story of the fateful months from May to July are illustrated in a series of maps showing the Battle of the Meuse, the battles of "The Bulge" and "The Gap." These maps make startlingly clear the extreme peril in which Britain stood during the summer of 1940.

The book may not be "cheerful reading," but surveyed in the light of the last six months' events it can be taken as a realistic background to the hardening and unifying of the national purpose in Britain. As Mr. Horrabin points out, "the will to win in this struggle against tyranny can only be strengthened by a resolute facing of the lessons of failures and defeats."

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